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Warren's Remarks on  
the Theological Institution  
1834

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REMARKS  
ON THE  
WESLEYAN  
THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION,

FOR THE  
*Education of the Junior Preachers:*

TOGETHER WITH  
THE SUBSTANCE OF A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE  
LONDON CONFERENCE OF 1834.

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BY SAMUEL WARREN, LL. D.

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*"Non tali auxilio—tempus eget."—Virg.*

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Wes. 1451

## REMARKS, &c.

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IT is with unaffected reluctance, and even with pain, that I feel myself called upon to lay before the Wesleyan Connexion, my reasons for publishing this Statement, as well as the Address which I delivered in Conference, on the subject of the Wesleyan Theological Institution. Still I think it my duty to give the Body generally, an opportunity of examining the validity of the grounds on which I opposed this measure—of recording my *protest* against it,—and, at the same time, of setting myself right with those who may have received impressions artfully circulated to my disadvantage, for the purpose of prejudicing my cause, and rendering my statements unavailing.

After the late discussion on the above subject had closed, it was not my intention to take any farther notice of what passed; much as my friends, and also myself, were sensible at the time of the unfairness with which I was treated, in expressing my conscientious dissent from the projected measure, and the gross partiality shown to the opposite side in urging forward, at all hazards, a favourite scheme of certain individuals. Let me assure the reader, that no merely harmless personalities, uttered in the heat of debate, by the opposite party, have had the slightest influence on my mind in adopting this method of expressing my sentiments, nor shall call forth one word of replication in these strictures, any more than they did at the moment of provocation. All that is intended by this exposition is, fairly to set forth those conscientious reasons which led me ultimately to dissent from the opinions of the majority; and,

in order to this, to take the only method allowed me of disavowing those base motives which had been openly imputed to me. Even this consideration would have been insufficient to call forth the present publication, had not the extent to which my character had been injured, been most explicitly announced to me by the Secretary of the Conference, the Rev. Robert Newton.

Towards the conclusion of the Conference, that individual, with an affected air of frankness, volunteered the following communication to me, during one of the sittings of the assembly:—"I will tell you candidly, Dr. Warren, what, perhaps, no other person has had the honesty to communicate to you, That all the Brethren say, had you only been proposed to fill one of the offices in the Institution, we should never have heard of your opposition."—Such a statement, spontaneously made to me, and coming from such an authority, gave me at once to see, that whatever abatement might be made, to reduce this random expression of the Secretary to tolerable accuracy, a serious injury had been inflicted both upon me, and upon the cause which I advocated. No other expedient therefore remained, but that to which I now have recourse, to free myself from this dishonourable imputation; and especially, as I was authoritatively refused *by the Chair* the liberty of doing so, at the commencement of my address—the only moment when it could have been of any material value—and was obstreperously clamoured down by the opposite party. These are the reasons why it is thought proper to give a faithful and candid statement of the whole affair, that the merits of the principal question may stand out to the impartial view of the Methodist Public. This will be attempted in the briefest way possible; after which the arguments advanced on the general question, by the speaker, will be laid before them.

Agreeably to a direction of the previous Conference, a Committee of twenty Preachers\* was appointed to meet in London, on Wednesday, October 23d, 1833, "to arrange a plan for the better education of our junior Preachers." This Committee met accordingly, and continued its sittings, by various adjournments, until Wednesday, October 30th. In most of its leading Resolutions, relative to the desirableness of an Institution, I concurred, till subsequent resolutions rendered the scheme suspicious,—principally as being likely to create or strengthen *a party*, rather than materially to improve the character of our ministry—to become an instrument of undue power and influence, in the hands of its chief promoters, over the just liberties both of the Preachers and the People. The first suspicious circumstance which occurred was, the eagerness with which certain members of the Committee, quitting (as Mr. Bunting himself more than once afterwards acknowledged) the legitimate subjects of discussion confided to them by the Conference, proceeded of their own authority—to *nominate the President of the Institution!* Even this circumstance, however—staggering as it was—did not so far influence my mind, as to prevent my concurrence with the Committee in the nomination of the Rev. Jabez Bunting to the Presidency. The offices of Theological and Classical Tutors remained to be filled; and anxious to try at least the fairness of the motives which dictated such an anomalous and unwarrantable proceeding, I rose and named two individuals of unexceptionable character and qualifications, who were NOT members of the Committee, as suitable to be put in nomination for the vacant offices.

\* The following are the names of the Committee: the President and Secretary of the Conference, the Rev. Messrs. Newton, Bunting, Gaulter, Entwisle, Reece, Taylor, S. Warren, Naylor, Stanley, Lessey, T. Jackson, Beecham, Hannah, Galland, Alder, Waugh, V. Ward, and Walton.

This proposal was, however, at once rejected, and two others who WERE members of the Committee, were nominated in their stead! This proceeding, together with the astounding proposal, that Mr. Bunting should not only be the President of the Institution, but also a Theological Tutor, and moreover, still retain the laborious, responsible, and influential office of senior Secretary of our foreign Missions, developed the sinister intentions of the parties, and led me at once *openly* to express, in the hearing of that individual himself, that to such an extraordinary assumption of power, I would never give my consent! From that moment my mind was strongly impressed with this conviction,—that whatever partial advantages might be ultimately derived from such an Institution, (although even these are doubtful) they would be far over-balanced by the immense dangers immediately consequent on its adoption. I at once became the sole dissentient, and was recognised and declared to be such, in the Resolutions subsequently put from the Chair. Is not the silly calumny, communicated to me by the credulous Secretary, now fully refuted? My opposition the fruit of my own exclusion from office? Absurd! Did I not vote for Mr. Bunting?—and (without waiting to see whether *I* was one of the elect) instantly nominate two of the ablest and most respectable of my Brethren for the remaining offices?—to say nothing of the incongruity of the thing,—that, at my age, and with my habits of life, the situation of a *Schoolmaster*, or of a *House-Steward*, under *such* a President, could ever be an object of my *ambition*!

Such, then, was the state of the question as left at the October Committee. In the interval between that period, and the time appointed for its adjourned meeting, a correspondence, (which will come into notice in the proper place) was carried on between me and the Committee.

Only one more circumstance is necessary to the distinct understanding of the subject, and the elucidation of certain passages in the following speech. In the adjourned meeting above referred to, on Thursday, the 17th of July, several *lay* Gentlemen had been incorporated with the original Committee, together with an additional number of Preachers. It was at this meeting that certain modifications of the plan, as left at the October Committee, were proposed for approbation. I stated at once, that in consequence of what had occurred at the October Committee, and the subsequent correspondence, I was constrained to dissent in principle from the *entire project*; reserving to myself the opportunity of stating my reasons more fully in my proper place in the Conference,—as such an exposition would have been unsuitable to the Committee as it was then composed. It was on this occasion that Mr. Bunting first presumed, amidst the surprised silence of the Committee, to insinuate, that I was under the influence of some mean—some unhallowed motive, in dissenting from my Brethren; adding, in a tone and manner peculiarly his own,—that my opposition was, “*the most UNPRINCIPLED which he ever knew,*”—subjoining, after a pause—“*and I speak ADVISE-EDLY!*” Adverting to the mixed character of the meeting in which we were associated, and what was due to the reputation of ministers of Christ, in the presence of their people, I forbore to make any remark upon the unseemly outrage which had been committed, not only upon the “charity which thinketh no evil,” but also upon the ordinary rules of good breeding; hoping I should at least be able to set myself right with my Brethren in the Conference.—It was, indeed, under serious consideration by me, and several of my friends, subsequent to the utterance of these opprobrious and unchristian words, whether it was not my duty, formally

to bring Mr. Bunting before the Conference, to answer for his unwarrantable language and conduct.

Under these circumstances, I deemed it *essential* to my being duly heard on the great argument of the Institution, that I should first endeavour, before my Brethren in Conference, to free myself from the unworthy aspersions which had been thus cast upon me, to the great detriment of the cause which I had to advocate: little thinking of the *coup de main* that was to be presently attempted! To my amazement, it was sought—I need hardly add, on grounds the most puerile and frivolous—in the first instance, *utterly to exclude me from taking any part whatever in the debate!* And it was not till after a conflict of upwards of an hour, that I succeeded in vindicating my right to be heard.—Did this savour of the spirit of candid enquiry? This device having failed to take effect, the next endeavour—somewhat more successful—was, to defeat every effort which I made to justify my conduct, in vindication of my motives from the calumny which the Rev. Mr. Bunting had been permitted openly, and without restraint, to fix upon me, in the presence of *lay Gentlemen*, as well as of my Brethren in the ministry. As this was obviously the very first point to which I was bound to direct my attention in delivering my sentiments; what must every impartial person think, when he is informed, that the moment I began to clear myself, in temperate terms, of the base motives imputed to me by Mr. Bunting, I was forbid *by the chair* to say one word on the subject, under pretence that I was *not in order!* and, in addition to this, that I was not allowed to advert to any thing which had passed in Committee,—“because that was *personal* matter!”—but must restrict my remarks only to the Resolutions which had been read in Conference!—It was in vain that I remonstrated,—that I urged, how utterly impossible it

was, on that condition, to make any rational statement whatever of my reasons for opposition, since almost all my arguments arose out of what took place in Committee. —Suffice it to say, that after a long continuance of the most indecent, unmannerly uproar I ever witnessed in a public assembly, I was obliged to submit to the hard necessity of entering, with the consciousness of prejudices unremoved, upon my arduous argument; not however till I had distinctly told the Chair, and the Conference,—with special mental reference to the step I am now taking,—That since I had been refused the justice of vindicating myself, and my cause, against calumny, before that Assembly, *I should reserve to myself the right of doing so in whatever other method I might think proper.* In conformity to this declaration, and that my reasons against the Institution may be fairly laid before my Brethren and the Methodist Public, I have made this statement of facts; and subjoin the following Speech, which is nearly verbatim as it was delivered in the Conference,—with the exception of a few sentences which the clamour of opposition rendered inaudible, or the authority of *the Chair* constrained to be suppressed.

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## THE SPEECH.

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MR, PRESIDENT,

Were I even capable of making a set speech before such an assembly as this, such an attempt would, I am sure, be deemed utterly unseasonable on the present occasion. In rising, therefore, as I now do, to oppose the Recommendations of so respectable a Committee, I must cast myself upon the kind indulgence of this Con-

ference, whilst I endeavour, as God may enable me, to express the honest convictions of my heart; and to explain to my honoured Fathers and Brethren, how it comes to pass, that I am the only dissentient in the Committee:—a circumstance which has exposed me to no little misrepresentation.

Nothing, I do assure you, Sir, is farther from my intention, than to avail myself of the too frequent occasions lately afforded me, of retaliating the rude and unbrotherly treatment which I had to encounter in some of the preparatory Committees. Such retaliation I deem utterly beneath the dignity of the subject under discussion, and the character of the audience before which I now stand. Carefully, therefore, will I endeavour to abstain from all such rash and boisterous volubility of speech, as that to which I allude, and cheerfully leave that unenviable talent in the undisputed possession of the individual who thought proper to have recourse to it, in opposing me in Committee.

Still, however, I think it due to myself, and to the cause which I advocate, in all fairness, just to notice, The disingenuous insinuation made by that individual, and made too, in a mixed Committee of lay Gentlemen, and of Preachers,—in order to impugn my *motives*; as though my opposition arose out of disappointed ambition, or something worse! This insinuation I did not then think worthy of refutation: and it will be in the recollection of those who were present, that I said so at the time. But I will now say, once for all, in opposition to this injurious inuendo,—That I do here solemnly declare, no situation whatever connected with the projected Institution, ever presented itself to my mind, as an object of desire.—I appeal to the whole course of my life, whether my conduct has ever merited this intemperate, this cruel, nay, even slanderous imputation of

ambition—or of intrigue—or of grasping at place or power in our Connexion: and whether, (in the judgment of my honoured Fathers and Brethren, who have known me now between thirty and forty years, as a Preacher in the Methodist Body) whether, I say, this ungenerous, this unchristian insinuation is not descriptive, rather of the individual who *uttered* it, than of me, on whom he endeavoured to fix it, with a view to excite your displeasure against me, and to prejudice my statements!

I will now avow, that one of the chief reasons of my opposition was this—my detecting, as I thought I did, in some of the deliberations of the October Committee, (the special circumstances of which I shall presently lay before you)—the detection, I say, of certain principles in operation, perilous to the christian liberty of the great body of the Preachers, and also of the People with whom we are united. This it was which first excited my alarm! and every succeeding stage of the business, has increased and confirmed my suspicion:—especially the shifting, and even contradictory policy pursued, to induce me to change my purpose. Such was, in the first place, the charge of “vacillation,” brought against me in Committee by Mr. Bunting; but which, if I mistake not, was disposed of to the entire satisfaction of most, if not all who were present on the occasion. Then, in the next place, the ingenious courtesy with which I was solicited by the same individual, again, and again, to accompany certain friends of the Institution, on a mission, which, had I consented to go, would have implicated me as having yielded the principle of my opposition. And, lastly, when this scheme did not succeed, the insulting manner in which my opposition was furiously denounced by him, as being “the most unprincipled which he ever knew:” and he added these words, “I speak ‘advisedly!’”

Now I ask, Sir, on this last article, of “unprincipled opposition,”—whether the steady manner in which I have maintained my opposition, and the reasons which I have uniformly avowed in Committee for doing so, answer the character of an *unprincipled* opposition? Or, whether, on the contrary, the crooked policy had recourse to by the opposite side, in urging forward, at all risks, a favourite scheme, is not rather entitled to the unseemly epithet of “unprincipled:” and I too speak “*advisedly*,” as will more clearly appear in the sequel.

HAVING made these preliminary remarks, I come now to the more important subject of deliberation.—However unworthy my individual services may have been, in endeavouring to promote the blessed cause in which we are all engaged, I will give place to no one in what I think to be a laudable desire to uphold and advance the character of the Methodist Connexion, for creditable talent and learning. I am also persuaded that I participate only one common sentiment with the rest of my Brethren, in the still more important desire, of maintaining that high character for simplicity and piety, which first raised our Connexion into extensive usefulness and efficiency; and which will ever be found to be essential to its prosperity, and its continuing to occupy the elevated position which it has attained.

Next to the importance of maintaining the simplicity and piety of the Body, my opinion is this,—that brotherly love, and unity of heart, ought to be cultivated with the utmost care, and guarded with sacred vigilance; and that nothing is so much to be deprecated, as any measure which might have a tendency to alienate the affections of the brethren from each other, and to introduce a system of government into our Connexion, which savours more of “the wisdom of this world, and of the princes of

this world, which come to nought," than of that "wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." For such reasons as these, I approach the consideration of the project of a new system of training our young men for the exercise of the Christian Ministry, not without the deepest anxiety, as to its probable results.

Let me not be misunderstood. In the abstract of the question I cordially concur with the Committee,—That the better education of our junior preachers is highly desirable. Therefore it was that I acquiesced in being nominated a member of the October Committee. Into that Committee I went with the most unprejudiced mind, and with a sincere desire to co-operate towards the common object. Along with that Committee I proceeded, in most of the details which came before it; and, in more than one instance gave way, where my opinion differed from that of the generality of my brethren, for the sake of preserving unanimity on the general question. Previous, however, to the conclusion of the meeting, *certain details* were brought into sight, so questionable in point of propriety, and, in my mind, so dangerous in their tendency and aspect upon the future welfare of the Body; that, notwithstanding my concurrence in the previous conclusions of the Committee, I could no longer refrain from expressing my dissent, and from entertaining suspicions of the expediency of the entire project. The opinion which I then formed, in proportion as I have longer and more carefully considered, has become more and more confirmed,—that the time is not yet come for adopting the Recommendations of the Committee; and that the only safe course which can be pursued at present, is that which has hitherto been pursued with such signal success, in advancing the Connexion to so

high a pitch of prosperity both at home and abroad.

The special reasons which have led me to this general conclusion, I would, with the utmost respect, but, at the same time, with all plainness of speech, and without reserve, lay before my honoured Fathers and Brethren.

In the first place, That the projected Institution, however plausible it may appear in theory, would be found in fact and in working, to be a very considerable departure from the original and uniform practice of Methodism hitherto. God himself has impressed on Methodism an extraordinary character, as if purposely to teach *us* especially, and also to shew the nations of the earth, that its success is not to be attributed to human "might or power," or political patronage, or worldly embellishments, "but to my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." I need only instance the character and qualifications of the instruments chosen by divine Providence, in the commencement of its history, and the contempt in which they were held by "the wise and prudent" of their day ;—though, even then, there were not wanting men sufficiently qualified to defend the out-works against all their literary opponents. Among many others, the following names claim honourable mention, Nelson, Asbury, Hopper, Mather, Pawson, Cownley, Olivers, Rhodes. And when special exigence required, what powerful coadjutors were raised up by Providence from without. Such were the Rev. John Fletcher, of Madeley, and the Reverend Dr. Coke. To carry our attention a little farther onwards,—Did not the hemisphere of Methodism become resplendent with talent and learning in the persons of Benson, Bradburn, Clarke, Moore, Watson, and many others who might be enumerated ? And what was the principal ground of admiration ? was it not this ?—That though the majority of the Preachers was not of this high intellectual character ;

yet, on this very account, God was more eminently seen and acknowledged in the effects of their ministry!—a striking illustration of St. Paul's chief occasion of glorying: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us:—for God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."\*

In the second place, That the improved and improving state of Society generally, will not fail to furnish suitable men for the work to which they may be called, conformably to our ordinary manner of training. Could we suppose, that those men only who are candidates for our ministry, partook not of the improving state of society,—

\* In connexion with this part of the subject, it was stated by the speaker, on the express authority of the Rev. Henry Moore, (as taken down from his own lips, being unable to be present at the discussion, owing to domestic affliction,)—That in justice to Mr. Wesley's memory, he was bound to aver, that a sentiment which has obtained currency, relative to his being favourable to such an Institution as is now proposed, is utterly erroneous. On the contrary, that he was strenuously opposed to it to the latest period of his life. That the statement given in Mr. Watson's life of Mr. Wesley, as though such an Institution met his approval, and was delayed only by circumstances, is a total mistake. That the sentiment attributed to Mr. *John* Wesley, was that only of Mr. *Charles* Wesley; who, indeed, was desirous of it, but was uniformly opposed by his brother, Mr. John Wesley.—As farther illustrative of this point, Mr. Moore stated, that in one of the Conferences, when Mr. Olivers brought forward this very subject, and pressed it with all his might, Mr. Mather maintained, in opposition to him, that the *Unction of the Holy One* was all that was needful. The Rev. John Fletcher also, who was present on the occasion, entirely concurred in this sentiment; adding, that if the *Unction of the Holy One* were only sought with suitable care, every other qualification necessary for a successful discharge of the Christian ministry, would come in its proper place, without any such Institution. This opinion met the most cordial approbation of Mr. John Wesley. S. W.

that they alone remained stationary, whilst all about them were advancing; this would be a powerful argument for having recourse to extraordinary measures to meet the exigence. But is this the case? Certainly not: far otherwise! Such is the peculiar character of Methodism, that whatever may be the elements of existing society, at any given period, it possesses the special faculty of availing itself of those resources which are best suited to promote its interests. The men thus raised up are indigenous to the soil and climate in which they are reared. Instead of being improved by the insalubrious fumes of a hot-house Institution, they would degenerate and become worthless, if not even noxious. Let them but enjoy the same method of cultivation, which the success of nearly a century has approved, (with as much additional care and vigilance as may be found practicable) and they will "flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon."

I appeal to matter of fact. Has Methodism ever stood still for want of suitable instruments? Nay, has not Providence from time to time furnished instruments the most valuable and efficient: and occasionally of the highest order too?—I shall be told, perhaps, of many individuals, whom, for want of superior talents and scholarship, it has been difficult for years past to station. But to whose account is this chiefly to be put? These embarrassments, like those of our enormous Chapel Debts, arose out of the imprudence of former years; but a recurrence of which there is now much less reason to fear, in the one case as well as in the other. The vessel has now chiefly passed these shallows, and is rapidly getting into deep water! Let me but for a moment advert to the general character of the young Candidates taken out within the last few years. Were it consistent with correct feeling, could I not name a host of young preachers among us,

of highly creditable talents and learning, already generally known through our Connexion ; and many others, who need only to be equally known, to be equally respected ? Could I not enumerate a choice band of excellent Missionaries, now occupying important stations abroad ? some of whom, occasionally re-visiting their native land, astonish us and the country at their intellectual improvement, and the high consideration which they have acquired in distant parts of the earth ?

I shrink not from a comparison of any average number of our young men, taken out within the last ten or fifteen years, with that of an equal number of young Dissenting Ministers, with all their Academical training, in point of talent, creditable scholarship, and, above all, of ministerial usefulness and efficiency. Nor have our Preachers now to acquire their character in the estimation of the world. They are every where received and acknowledged as the ministers of Christ, and their success sufficiently attests the approbation of God himself !

In the third place, That the signal success with which it has pleased Almighty God to own the course hitherto pursued, indicates rather the wisdom of "walking by the same rule, and minding the same things," than of commencing a new course, however small the divergency may seem at the outset. Had Methodism retrograded during the last twenty or thirty years ; had it even remained stationary ; or had any of its energies become crippled, we might reasonably stand still to enquire into the cause, and endeavour to apply a remedy. But what is the truth ? Why, never was the Body in a more healthy state. Never did such astonishing success crown our labours, both at home and abroad, as during the preceding year, when an increase of upwards of *twenty-six thousand* members was added to our Societies, as reported in our last Minutes of Conference. Are we not correct

in attributing this unprecedented success to the special blessing of Almighty God, on our working the machinery of Methodism *as it is at present constituted*? And are not our people correct in acknowledging the same sentiment?—Besides, in a measure of such vast importance, is it not proper to take into mature consideration, not only, nor even *chiefly*, what is the opinion of a few more wealthy individuals among us; but also what thousands of the most pious, the most judicious, and the longest tried members of our Societies, think of the projected Institution? for I hesitate not to express my opinion, that thousands of our most valuable members, deprecate this new scheme as fraught with incalculable mischief to our Connexion.

Nor ought we to lose sight of one special aspect of the affair. With whom did this question of the Institution originate? Did it originate with the *People*—the party of all others the most deeply concerned? Had any official, or general expression, complaining of the insufficiency and inefficacy of our Ministry, emanated from *them*?—Nothing of the kind! As for the affected argument employed to help the opposite side,—That certain preachers are sought by the people with eagerness when Conference draws near, whilst others are neglected, or some even remonstrated against, (not unfrequently without sufficient reason, and sometimes to the disadvantage of the parties petitioning) Why, no conceivable state of things will ever exempt the Stationing Committee, and the Conference, from similar difficulties, as long as there shall be diversities of gifts and graces, different degrees of acceptability and learning among the preachers, and variety of tastes and inclinations among the people. Nay, it is even doubtful, whether this proposed endeavour to pander to the taste of fastidious hearers, will not greatly enhance the difficulty which is

now so ostentatiously set forth, in order to carry a point! —How far the *People* are concerned in this affair, let a recent fact decide. When a strenuous endeavour was made by the *Preachers*, at the last March Quarterly Meeting of the City Road Circuit, to elicit an opinion from its members favourable to the projected Institution; taken as they were by surprise, and after a large proportion of the meeting had retired through the lateness of the hour to which the subject had been postponed, a small majority was indeed obtained. But what was the result of the following Quarter Day? Why, indignant at the unfair manner in which the question had been carried at the former Meeting, the June Meeting came to a decision by a large majority, to rescind the resolution of the March Quarterly Meeting! Such was the judgment of the *People*, so far as the oldest Society in the Metropolis is concerned.

Whether a fairer and more disinterested opinion of the *People* is to be gathered, from a Meeting got up in London for the same purpose, on Saturday, July 26th., let the facts of the case declare. A very numerous issue of cards of invitation had been made, to lay Gentlemen both in Town and Country; only about forty of whom responded to the invitation.—Not to dwell on the impropriety of such a Meeting *anticipating* the judgment of the Conference, respecting any plan which the October Meeting had yet to submit for its approbation, and thus, by the very respectability of the Meeting, overawing its deliberations,—not to dwell on this; how could any *impartial* opinion be formed from such a meeting, when the condition of being admitted to it was explicitly stated to be, that the persons applying for entrance must be, “*Friends of the Institution.*” This, surely, is one of the most compendious and effectual methods of obtaining a majority that can be imagined!—And then, as to the

liberality of the *People* thus represented,—when it is recollected, that the dispositions of most of the wealthy individuals throughout our Connexion had already been sounded; and that it was intended to make a demonstration from this Meeting, that money should not be wanting to further the project; greatly as some individual subscriptions evinced the liberality of those who favoured the Institution, it would have been a far more satisfactory test of general approbation, had only the same amount been the spontaneous offerings of 250,000 Members of Society, rather than of 20 or 30 individuals.--But, after all, *we* have more immediately to do with what is of infinitely greater value than gold and silver. It is our especial duty to guard the *spiritual* interests of our Zion, and to beware of the corrupting influence of wealth! lest, unawares, we be perverted from the simplicity of Christ, and his self-denying religion, and feel ourselves within the inextricable toils of a few rich men!

—“Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.”

THESE, Sir, are some of the reasons why I demur to the measures proposed by the Committee. But the weightiest reason of all the rest, because all the rest appear to me to be contained in it, and naturally to flow from it, is *this*,—That the Institution now proposed, has an obvious tendency to increase such power in the hands of *a few individuals*, as is likely to be detrimental to the liberty of the Preachers, and perilous to the unity of the Body itself. Far be it from me to insinuate, that any preconcerted scheme of infringing the liberty of their Brethren, or the rights of the People, is in the contemplation of any of the honourable members of the Committee. Still, if I saw, or thought I saw, in their deliberations, any thing hazardous in these respects, I should have thought myself but ill discharging my duty, had I

wholly held my peace. I therefore crave a few more minutes, whilst, in the most unreserved manner, I state my reasons for entertaining fears on this subject.

And *first*, That the Committee entered at all upon the question of the Officers to be appointed over the Institution, was a very suspicious circumstance,—thus attempting *themselves* to create the Faculty. The only subject proposed by the Conference for their consideration was,—“To arrange a plan for the better education of our junior Preachers.” Thus, while the Conference pointed out the specific work assigned to the Committee, it very judiciously reserved to itself, the sole prerogative of nominating the Officers of the Institution,—should such an Institution be finally approved. Of this, indeed, the Committee seem to have been fully aware, however otherwise they thought proper to act; as appears in their printed pamphlet: a precious specimen of the consistency of which I shall just quote. “A few proposals were made concerning the Officers of the Institution; but as the Committee would not interfere with what appears to be the proper and exclusive prerogative of the Conference,—they do not feel themselves authorised, at present, to give publicity to them.”\* Now here the Committee tell us, in the same breath, how deeply they are impressed with the conviction, that the nomination of the Officers, is “the proper and exclusive prerogative of the Conference;” and yet in the most unceremonious manner do they usurp this prerogative themselves! Nay, what is still more remarkable, they tell us in the first part of this sentence, that they *did* interfere “concerning the Officers of the Institution;” and yet, in the very next words they say, they “would *not* interfere with this exclusive prerogative of the Conference!” It is true, they have just the decency to add

\* Proposals, &c. page 30.

in conclusion, That they do not feel themselves at liberty to make public these most extraordinary proceedings!

Although this may appear somewhat strange, considering the long established reputation of the greater part of the Committee for their wisdom, and prudence, and modesty; it must appear still more remarkable, that of all the Officers proposed to superintend the Institution, not one was nominated but from among *themselves*! An attempt, indeed, was made, by the individual now addressing you, to propose one or two persons, of high character and qualifications, from among our brethren *not* on the Committee: but no, the proposal could not be entertained: not one was allowed to be put in nomination with *themselves*! Nay, an intimation was given (unwittingly) by a venerable member of the Committee, that the subject had already been carefully considered *previous* to the Meeting!

*Secondly*, That one and the same individual was proposed to occupy the following Offices;—First, to be the President of the Institution: Secondly, to be a Theological Tutor: and, Thirdly, still to retain the senior Secretaryship of our Foreign Missions. Now, I ask, in the first place, are the duties of these respective offices of such a nature, as to allow of any individual man discharging them all, in such a manner as they ought to be discharged? I ask, in the next place, whether such is indeed the dearth of intellect and learning amongst us,—of religious, of moral, of literary qualifications, that throughout the whole length and breadth of the Connexion, not one preacher, beyond the limits of their own Committee, can be found, to rescue this individual from being overwhelmed and smothered under this accumulation of Offices! Is the Methodist Connexion at length dwindled to this contemptible destitution of talent and

learning ! I ask, in the last place, whether it be safe, and consistent with the liberty of the Brethren, and the peace of the Body, that all these Offices should be occupied at once, by any individual whatever !

*Thirdly*, That a proposal was actually made in the Committee,—That, having nominated the President of the Institution, the choice of all the other officers might be left to himself ! Now if such a proposal as this could be made in the very outset of the scheme, for what are we not to prepare ourselves next ? Does not every one see, that we have only to suppose the President of the Institution to be possessed of *Episcopal* propensities, and it follows, as a matter of course, that the Institution will soon become, neither more nor less, neither better nor worse—if indeed worse can come of it—than a *Dominant Episcopal Faction* ! From hence the Connexion must prepare itself to receive a Liturgical Service, a splendid Ritual, an illegitimate Episcopal Ordination, a cassocked race of Ecclesiastics, and whatever else may render this new, this improved edition of Methodism, imposing and magnificent in the eyes of the world ! But what, in the mean time, will become of our original—characteristic simplicity and piety ? In vain will you endeavour to supply their place by your showy Chapels, and your pealing Organs !—And where will be the liberty of the great body of the Preachers ? Was it not in foresight of such perils as these which now threaten us, that our venerable Father and Founder, so earnestly cautioned some of the Preachers of his day, against assuming a superiority over the rest, and employing their influence with partiality ? As with his dying breath he addressed the Conference of 1785, in the following most affecting Letter :

## TO THE METHODIST CONFERENCE.

*Chester, April 7th, 1785.*

MY DEAR BRETHREN,

SOME of our Travelling Preachers have expressed a fear, That, after my decease, you would exclude them either from preaching in connexion with you, or from some other privileges which they now enjoy. I know no other way to prevent any such inconvenience, than to leave these my last words with you.

I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the Deed of Declaration, to assume any superiority over your Brethren; but let all things go on, among those Itinerants who choose to remain together, exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit.

In particular, I beseech you, if you ever loved me, and if you now love God and your Brethren; to have no respect of persons, in stationing the Preachers, in choosing Children for Kingswood-School, in disposing of the Yearly Contribution and the Preachers' Fund, or any other public money. But do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you even to the end.

JOHN WESLEY.

*Fourthly*, That the methods had recourse to, in order to represent to the Connexion, the *unanimity* of the Committee in their Conclusions, were not sufficiently characterized by simplicity and godly sincerity. Not till the circumstance just alluded to, of proposing to surrender almost the whole power over the Institution, into the hands of one individual; together with a similar power over our Foreign Missions:—That is to say, almost *the sole Dictatorship, both of the Home and the*

*Foreign department*,—not till this posture of our affairs was too obvious to be misinterpreted, did I express my opposition. But, from that moment I felt it to be my conscientious duty to dissent, and spoke out my sentiment in the hearing of that individual, and of the whole Committee. Accordingly, when I nominated two persons *not* on the Committee to fill the vacant offices, (not merely as being eminently fitted for the situations, but also as a *test* of the fairness and honesty of the Committee)—and they were rejected, and those only who *were* members of the Committee, were allowed to be put in nomination, I refused my concurrence: and that refusal was recognised in the most open and formal manner by the President, who put the Resolutions respecting the persons nominated, in as solemn a manner from the chair, as any of the preceding Resolutions; and the vote having been taken, he himself pronounced the Meeting to be “unanimous, with the *exception* of Dr. Warren.”

Thus the matter stood, till the Manuscript, prepared by the Secretaries and submitted to the Members of the Committee for their approbation, as conveying a correct report of the proceedings, came into my hands; when, to my utter astonishment I found it stated, that “*the Committee were quite unanimous in their Conclusions.*” The ingenuity by which this astounding declaration was made plausible is remarkable; the Secretary having *omitted* those Conclusions from which I dissented, specifying them on a *separate* paper, whilst those only in which the Committee were unanimous, were to be published to the Connexion! Before sending the Manuscript forward, I inserted the word “*not*” in the margin, so that the sentence might be read correctly thus, “the Committee were *not* quite unanimous in their Conclusions.” But lest any misunderstanding should arise from such an insertion, I immediately

wrote the following letter to one of the Secretaries in London, and sent a copy of it to the President.

Manchester, Feb. 22nd., 1834.

Dear Sir,

A Manuscript detailing some of the deliberations of the late October Committee, relative to the better education of the junior Preachers, has just passed through my hands. As the document positively states, that "the Committee were quite unanimous in their Conclusions," I feel myself bound in conscience to *protest* against being a party to such a declaration; notwithstanding the artifice by which the points of my dissent are omitted, and contained in an accompanying half sheet, as "Additional Proposals, not now to be printed."

Requesting that you will submit this communication to the parties concerned, previously to the Manuscript being printed and circulated,

I remain, dear Sir,

Your's respectfully,

SAMUEL WARREN.

*To the Rev. D. Walton, }  
one of the Secretaries  
of the October Meeting.*

To the above letter I received the following reply :

Dear Doctor,

Your letter has been laid before the London members of the Committee who met to decide on the printing of the report. They wish me to say in reply; 1st. That it appears to them proper that the Resolutions contained in the appended half sheet, should not,

for the present, be printed. 2nd. That it does not appear to them that any artifice was used in making this distinction; but that the reasons which led to it are very obvious. 3rd. That they think, to the other Resolutions you cannot hesitate to give your assent, as they appear to be such as we were unanimous in approving. If, however, you think that you cannot affix your name to them, and wish it to be withheld, the Committee will, though unwillingly, leave it out of the printed copy.

I remain,

Your's affectionately,

DANIEL WALTON, Secretary.

77, Hatton Garden, }  
March 12th, 1834. }

To the Rev. Samuel Warren, LL. D.

To this letter I replied:

Manchester, March 15th, 1834.

Dear Sir,

The expedient suggested by the third Resolution in your letter of the 12th inst., in order to report the unanimity of the October Committee, appears to me more objectionable, than even that on which I have already animadverted. It does not appear to me that the Committee appointed by the Conference, has authority to omit the name of one of its constituted members to effect unanimity; and, least of all, against the consent of that individual, which he certainly cannot give.

That the "*Proposals not now to be printed*," were as truly part of the deliberations of the Committee, as those which are intended to be printed, no one present

at the Meeting can deny; and had they been earlier brought into view, they would have materially influenced my judgment on those points in which I concurred. How then, consistently "with simplicity and godly sincerity," can it be deliberately stated to the Connexion, that "the Committee were quite unanimous in their conclusions!"

I remain, dear Sir,

Your's respectfully,

SAMUEL WARREN.

*To the Rev. D. Walton.*

What was my amazement, and what must be the amazement of every one who hears the statement,—that, notwithstanding my recognised dissent *at the time* from some of the Resolutions put to the vote in the October Committee, and all the circumstances of my *written protest* against a public profession of unanimity, the Committee deliberately and resolutely did persist in printing, and circulating throughout our Connexion,—“That they were *unanimous* in their conclusions!”\* And now, Sir, give me leave to ask, to which side does the charge of “*unprincipled opposition*,” more justly apply?

I HAVE now laid before my honoured Fathers and Brethren, with all faithfulness, my reasons for dissenting from the Recommendations of the Committee. In the following conclusions I confidently rest:—*First*, That God has manifestly owned and blest the original Constitution of Methodism, and its manner of working hitherto. *Secondly*, That to preserve the simplicity and piety of the Body from degenerating into outward show,

\* Proposals, &c. p. 4.

and lifeless formality, is a matter of the utmost importance. *Thirdly*, That whatever has the remotest tendency to alienate the affections of the Brethren from each other, and to create suspicion of *the coalition of a few, or the ascendancy of an individual*, to the detriment of the liberty of the Preachers, and the just rights of the People, is to be deprecated as one of the deadliest evils which can arise among us!

In voting, therefore, for the adoption, or the rejection of the Recommendations of the Committee, you are called to decide upon this solemn alternative;—Whether the chief glory of Methodism shall continue to increase yet “more and more, unto the perfect day;” or whether you will have to date its decline from the present hour, by the adoption of a carnal and worldly policy!—Whether you will continue to pursue the same path, rendered illustrious by the labours, the sufferings, and the successes of our Fathers and Brethren, who have triumphantly passed the Jordan, and entered their heavenly rest; or whether you will incur the fearful risk of losing your way in the wilderness!—Whether, in a word, you will barter the pure and solid gold of the Sanctuary, for the base alloy, and showy tinsel of external decorations!

I call upon you, therefore, in the fear of God, to judge of this subject, regardless of the favour or displeasure of any individual, or number of individuals, and of any arguments, however plausible, which may have a tendency to conceal the true bearing of this lately concocted measure. And may that Being, in whose hands are the hearts of all men, dispose you to decide in favour of the original simplicity and piety of the Body; the continuance of Brotherly love; and the indissoluble unity of our blessed Connexion!

Conformably to these sentiments, I move, as an

Amendment to the Motion before the Conference, *That we pass on to the order of the day.*\*

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THE issue of the debate, which occupied nearly the whole of one day, presented a Minority of THIRTY ONE,† in favour of the Amendment; which, considering the great disadvantages they had to contend against, and the long established influence of the persons opposed to them—an influence which, till the agitation of this important question, had for many years held almost undisputed sway,—is calculated to inspire the utmost confidence, That a more liberal state of things is rapidly advancing in our Connexion; that the evils complained of from *without*, admit of a safe and salutary cure from *within*; and that the Unity of the Body, which has been but too obviously placed in peril, may now be maintained by a recurrence to our original simplicity, and by strengthening the bonds of Brotherly affection

\* It will ever be a subject of pleasing recollection to those Brethren who Seconded and Supported the *Amendment*, that no unfairness in the Debate, no rudeness, no clamour on the opposite side, did in one instance provoke a similar conduct in any of *them*—the whole Conference being witness! The character of their Addresses was such as would have done honour to the first deliberative Assemblies in the Nation—dignified, eloquent, argumentative. Such especially were those of the chief Speakers, the Rev. Messrs. Bromley, (who seconded the Amendment) James Wood, Burdsall, Rowland, Haswell. The Rev. Messrs. Beaumont, and Everett, rose at the same time to address the Conference in favour of the Amendment, (having *purposely* reserved themselves to so late a period) but such was the impatience of part of the Assembly to urge the Debate to an immediate conclusion, that they could not be heard.

† Of which number the following are recollected;—the Rev. Messrs. James Wood, John Reynolds, Atherton, Burdsall, R. Waddy, P. Garrett, Everett, Haswell, Beaumont, Bromley.—The Rev. Henry Moore was anxiously desirous of being present at the debate, and had promised to *second* the Amendment, but was prevented by severe domestic affliction.

throughout the great body both of the Preachers and of the People. This alone can concentrate our energies, and give efficacy to our exertions.

The announcement of the Majority by Mr. Bunting, was characteristic of his eloquence,—“*A multitude which no man could number.*” —Not to call in question the good *taste*, and the *piety* of this solemn reference, what shall we say as to its *accuracy*? Instead of no man being able to number the majority, even a child of five years of age might have accomplished the task in less than five minutes; and, especially, if the testimony of three witnesses is to be relied upon, who, in the hearing of the writer affirmed, that from an advantageous situation of viewing the state of the vote, (which was by a show of hands) the number of Preachers who did not vote on either side of the question, must have been between one hundred and fifty, and two hundred!

One circumstance, in connexion with the Speech just given at large, equally characteristic of the individual who announced the Majority, may be mentioned as a mere matter of curiosity. After the conclusion of the above Speech, Mr. Bunting rose, and having uttered a few sentences with unusual emotion, he ended with these *remarkable words*, at the highest pitch of his voice, and with a violence of gesticulation which gave serious alarm to his friends for his personal safety:—“After what has been said,” (alluding chiefly to these words in the Speech,—‘the coalition of a few, or the ascendancy of an individual’) “Nothing shall ever induce me to take any lead in the Institution, short of the threat of *expulsion from this Body*!—The correct interpretation of this extraordinary saying will be found in the Minutes of this year’s Conference, where the reader will see appended to the London Station the following official announce-

ment; "Jabez Bunting is appointed the *President* of the Wesleyan Theological Institution." It will of course be enquired, whether this appointment was accepted under the fearful alternative of expulsion from the Body?—Not one such unkind word was employed by the Conference, in urging Mr. Bunting to accept of the Presidency of the Institution; nor, upon the reading of this appointment, was Mr. Bunting heard to utter one pathetic word of remonstrance, or disapprobation!\*

WHETHER, under all the circumstances of the case, it was wise in the Conference to urge this proposal of an Institution into *instant accomplishment*, remains to be proved. Abundantly sufficient evidence appeared in the Conference of the divided opinion of many influential Preachers, and some of the *Fathers* of the Connexion—men long revered for their piety and their wisdom. More than half the number of our Preachers, unable to attend the Conference, have had no opportunity to offer an opinion upon these late—these hasty proceedings of the Conference, on this momentous affair. Nor have *the People*—the party most deeply interested—had any opportunity whatever of expressing their views on the subject. That serious alarms, and dissatisfaction were

\* To extricate Mr. Bunting from the curious dilemma into which his rashness had betrayed him, the following expedient was suggested, and even so far acted upon, as that a considerable number of the first impression of the Stations was actually printed off, with the result of the wise deliberation of his Friends:—instead of *President*, he was therefore thus announced, "Jabez Bunting, A. M., is appointed the *Visitor* of the Wesleyan Institution."—Upon farther consideration, however, and especially upon Mr. Bunting's express declaration, that he would not accept of office "unless power was connected with it," the change was made from the designation of *Visitor* to that of *President*! as it now stands; and all the copies of the first impression of the Stations,—with the exception of only a few which *unfortunately* got into circulation—were cancelled.

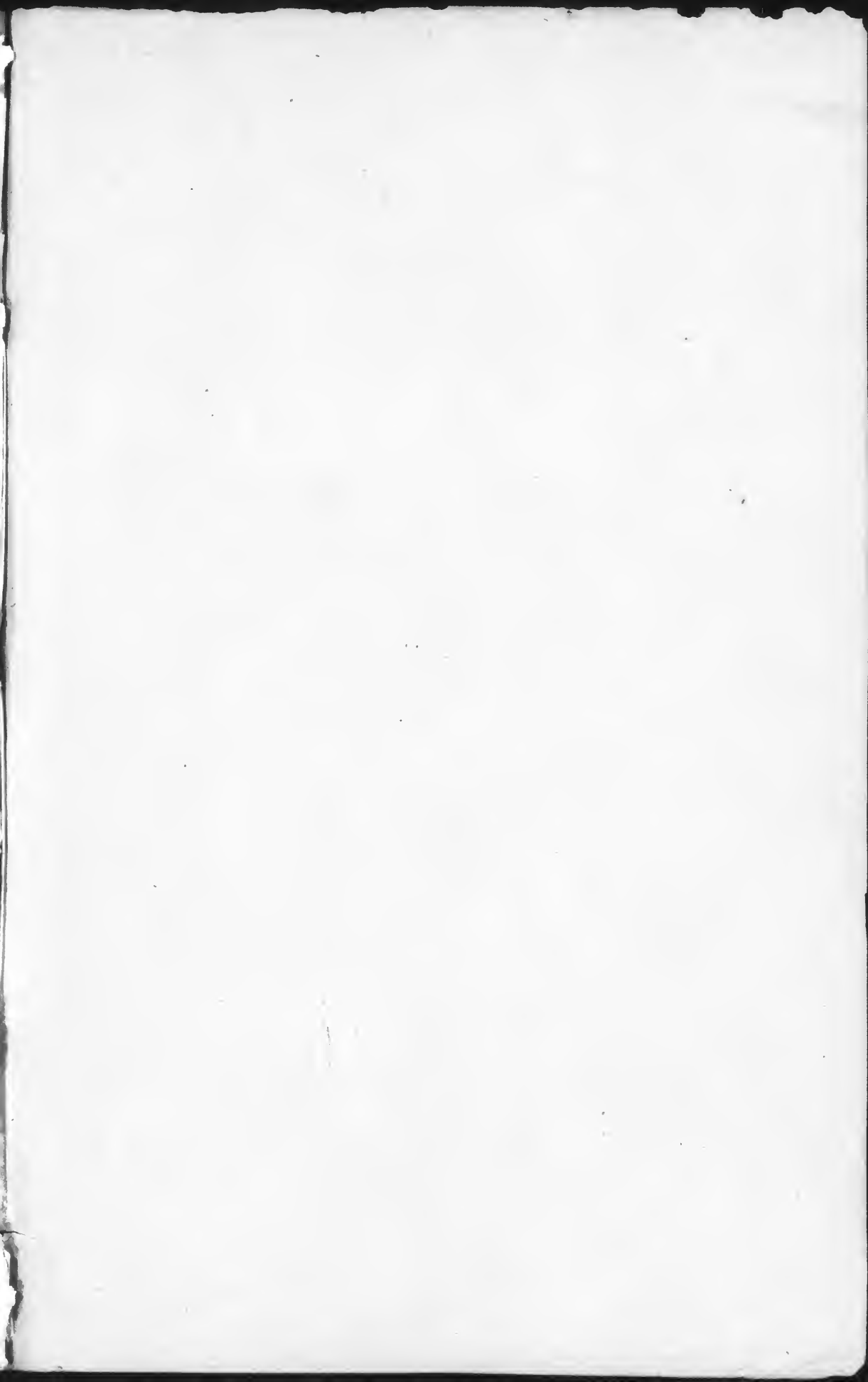
prevailing among them was evident, in not a few Remonstrances, which, only in *anticipation* that such steps might be taken, were sent to the Conference, from highly respectable quarters ; but which were not even *read*. Only one exception is to be made : but that is one of a very serious character, and the circumstances of which *imperatively demanded* a hearing. As soon as the determination of the Conference was known, a most respectful and temperate, but, at the same time, powerful and urgent Remonstrance, signed by twelve Trustees of Chapels in and near London, was *presented* to the Conference and *read*. The purport of this important document was,—That a conscientious sense of duty led the Trustees earnestly and solemnly to beseech the Conference, not to take any decisive measures, relative to the proposed Institution, till all the parties concerned,—and themselves especially as Trustees—had been allowed sufficient time to consider, whether the proposed Institution did not hazard the changing of the character of *that Ministry*, which induced them to become personally responsible. That having already heard of great dissatisfaction among the People upon this subject, they hastened to present their earnest entreaty and remonstrance, (which would have been more numerous signed, had they only had more time) that nothing definitive be entered upon, till the next Conference of 1835, had afforded them opportunity of satisfying themselves of the *Legality*, as well as propriety, of hazarding the succession of the Wesleyan Ministry, and the unity of the Connexion.

ON reviewing the whole affair, let any candid and impartial person say, whether in the history of Methodism, any one measure of greater importance to the entire Body was ever projected, both as it relates to the

piety, and the government of the Connexion ; and whether any measure was ever more indecently hurried into accomplishment, or carried with so high a hand over the People, and those Preachers who were opposed to the measure. A method of proceeding too, utterly at variance with *the spirit* of a pledge given to the People in 1797, which assures the Connexion, that, “in order to prevent any degree of precipitation in making new Rules, and to obtain information of the sentiments of our people, no Regulations will be finally confirmed, till after a year’s consideration and the knowledge of the sentiments of the Connexion at large, through the medium of their public Officers.”—That no Institution amongst us claims a higher regard than the Christian Ministry, and requires greater vigilance to guard its Sanctity, will be admitted by every judicious person ; and, obviously, nothing is more incongruous, than attempting to qualify instruments for this Sacred Work, by measures which require to be carried through by artifice and clamour, rather than christian simplicity and calm deliberation :—nothing so likely to deteriorate and ruin, rather than improve, the character of Candidates for the Sacred Office, as expedients which savour more of party spirit, worldly policy, and dishonourable intrigue, than of “the meekness and gentleness of Christ.”

Whether the policy had recourse to, and the steps lately taken,—as faithfully detailed in the above statement of facts—in reference to the Establishment of THE WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION, be such as a God of holiness can look upon with approbation, and such as are likely to ensure his blessing, every discerning and pious person will now be able to form his own opinion, and consequently judge how far it is deserving of his support.

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